

Borough of



Wednesbury.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31ST, 1905.

WALTER C. GARMAN, M.D. Edin.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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REPORT

UPON THE

HEALTH OF WEDNESBURY,

FOR THE YEAR 1905,

BY

WALTER GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE
WEDNESBURY TOWN COUNCIL.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my Annual Report for the year 1905. The statistics which are given are based upon an assumed population of 26,700, as was the case last year.

1.—VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during 1905 was 871 (males, 459, females, 412), which is equal to a birth-rate of 32·6 per 1000 of the population. The natural increase of births over deaths was 464.

The deaths from all causes numbered 407, which is equal to a death-rate of 15·2 per 1000 of the population. The deaths of children under five years of age numbered 199, or 48·8 per cent. of the total deaths. Of these 126 were under one year of age.

The following table furnishes an analysis of deaths under five years of age during the past five years :—

	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905
Premature Birth and Wasting Diseases	18	27	13	20	17
Bronchitis and Pneumonia ...	37	46	41	36	35
Scarlatina	3	12	22	4	—
Measles	1	13	1	55	29
Whooping Cough	16	11	19	7	7
Diarrhœa	29	7	11	42	17
Diphtheria	3	1	4	15	3
Other Causes	86	102	105	103	91
	193	219	216	282	199
Percentages of total Deaths	50·00	48·00	49·4	56	48·8

The next table gives the deaths due to Zymotic Disease. These numbered 78—a number equal to a Zymotic death-rate of 2·9 per 1000. For the purpose of comparison the corresponding figures for the preceding four years are included in this Table.

	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905
Small Pox	—	—	—	—	—
Fever—Simple, Continued, and Typhoid	4	5	3	8	8
Scarlet Fever	3	13	27	5	—
Measles	1	14	1	57	30
Diphtheria	5	1	5	19	7
Diarrhœa	31	7	13	44	17
Whooping Cough	16	11	19	7	8
Influenza	5	2	5	7	8
	65	53	73	147	78
Death-rate per 1000	2·5	1·9	2·7	5·5	2·9

Following is a table giving the mortality from pulmonary disease :—

Year.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia.	Phthisis.	Total.
1901	72	12	84
1902	98	19	117
1903	81	18	99
1904	70	27	97
1905	75	29	104

The next table is a statement of the Vaccination performed during the year ending June 30th, 1905 :—

Births Registered.	Successfully Vaccinated.	Insusceptible.	Dead Unvaccinated.	Medical Postponements.	Certificates sent in of conscientious objections.	Removals known.	Removals unknown.	Unaccounted for.
930	747	8	93	5	41	7	27	2

The inquests held by the Coroner numbered 17, and may be thus classified :—

Natural Causes	...	...	...	...	5
Accidents	...	...	...	...	11
Suicide...	...	...	...	...	1
					—
Total	...	...	...	...	17

The next table sets forth the deaths occurring during 1905 from all causes, classified according to diseases and ages for the four quarters, and of births for the same period —

URBAN DISTRICT OF WEDNESBURY.

Causes of, and ages at, death during 1905 :—

CAUSE OF DEATH.	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
Measles	30	4	25	1			
Scarlet Fever							
Whooping Cough	8	2	5	1			
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	9		5	4			
Enteric Fever	8			2		6	
Influenza	8	1				4	3
Diarrhœa	17	16	1				
Enteritis	3	3					
Phthisis	29	2	2	5	2	16	2
Other Tubercular Diseases ...	5	2	2	1			
Cancer	11					9	2
Bronchitis	47	19	5	2	1	5	15
Pneumonia	28	4	7			15	2
Alcoholism, Cirrhosis of Liver...	1					1	
Venereal Disease	3	3					
Premature Birth	17	17					
Diseases and Accidents of Par- turation	3				1	2	
Heart Disease	25					11	14
Accidents	11		3	2		5	1
Suicides	1			1			
All other Causes... ..	143	53	16	4	3	29	38
All Causes	407	126	71	23	7	103	77

Following is a table giving the average birth-rate, death-rate, and zymotic rate for the past ten years :—

Year.	Estimated Population.	No. of Births.	No. of Deaths.	Death-rate per 1000 living.	Birth-rate per 1000 living.	Zymotic death-rate.
1896	25,000	859	528	20·8	37·9	3·2
1897	„	899	499	19·7	35·5	2·7
1898	26,000	939	486	18·6	36·0	3·9
1899	„	900	480	18·4	34·6	3·7
1900	„	925	526	20·2	35·5	4·4
1901	26,544	876	387	14·5	33	2·4
1902	26,700	954	450	16·8	35·9	1·9
1903	„	900	437	16·3	33·7	2·7
1904	„	933	503	18·8	34·9	5·5
1905	„	871	407	15·2	32·6	2·9

Following is a list of deaths occurring during the year in each street, the zymotic deaths being separately indicated :—

STREET.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Alexandra Road	2	2
Addison Street	5	1
Albert Street	6	
Alma Street	3	2
Bilston Road	6	
Birmingham Street	1	
Brookside	1	
Brunswick Park Road	8	2
Bright Street	4	2
Brickkiln Street	2	1
Bridge Street	6	
Chapel Street	8	3
Chapel Street, King's Hill	1	
Corns Street	1	
Camphill Lane	1	
Camp Street	7	
Church Hill	5	2
Church Street... ..	7	1
Church Street, King's Hill	2	1
Cobden Street... ..	4	
Cook Street	7	1
Cross Street	7	2
Corporation Street	2	
Delves	2	1

STREET.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Dale Street	5	1
Darlaston Road	6	
Darlington Street	5	1
Dudley Street	10	
Edward Street	3	
Earps Lane	2	
Elwell Street	3	
Foley Street	4	
Foster Street	7	2
Franchise Street	4	
Finchpath Terrace	2	2
Friar Street	2	1
Great Western Street	5	1
George Street	1	
High Street (Upper and Lower)	2	1
Holden Road	1	
Hitchen's Croft	1	
Hill Street	4	1
Hyde's Lane	2	
Hobbins Street	2	
Holyhead Road	13	1
Hall End	4	2
High Bullen	6	1
Hobbs Hole	2	
King's Hill	19	1
King Street	2	
Kendrick Street	1	
Little Hill	7	1
Ladbury's Lane	9	5
Lea Brook	7	2
Market Place	3	
Mill Street	4	
Meeting Street	8	3
Moxley	18	4
Moore Street	2	1
North Street	1	
New Cross Street	2	2
Old Park Road	5	
Old Union Street	3	1
Oxford Street	6	2
Perry Street	3	
Pound Road	1	
Pinfold Street... ..	3	
Piercy Street	10	1
Portway Road	13	4
Potters Lane	4	
Park Street	4	
Queen Street	2	2

STREET.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Russell Street...	2	
Rooth Street ...	1	
Ridding Lane ...	4	
School Street ...	4	
School Street, King's Hill ...	1	
Spring Head ...	2	
St. Paul's Road ...	1	
Short Street ...	2	2
St. James' Street ...	10	2
Stafford Street ...	7	2
Sparrows forge Lane...	3	
Terrace Street ...	3	2
Trouse Lane ...	5	
Union Street ...	6	2
Vicarage ...	1	
Vicar Street ...	3	1
Windmill Street ...	2	2
Wood Street ...	1	
Wellcroft Street ...	3	1
Walsall Road ...	6	
Walsall Road King's Hill ...	2	
Wood Green ...	7	

Following is a table giving the cases of Zymotic Diseases notified to the Health Authority under the notification of Infectious Diseases Act :—

Scarlet Fever ...	82
Diphtheria ...	75
Erysipelas ...	33
Enteric Fever ...	24
Puerperal Fever ...	2
Membranous Croup ...	1
Total	217

From the foregoing figures, the Council will be able to form an opinion as to the health of the town during the year under review. It will be observed that only once in the past ten years has there been a lower general death-rate, viz., in 1901, when it fell to 14·5, as compared with 15·2 in 1905. The average death-rate for the previous ten years was 18·3 per 1,000. The average zymotic death-rate for those ten years was 3·2, whereas that for 1905 was 2·9, a

figure not only below the average, but one that contrasts very favourably with the corresponding rate in 1904, which was 5·5. The deaths of young children under five years of age constituted 48 per cent. of the deaths from all causes—which is about an average.

That much of the improvement in the figures for 1905 as compared with 1904 is due to the much lessened prevalence of zymotic disease in the later year, will be plain from a comparison of the zymotic deaths, which were 147 in 1904, and only 78 in 1905. At the same time, it must not be supposed that even this reduced list is free from disturbing features. It is true that no death resulted either from small-pox or scarlet fever, indeed the former disease was not met with in any form. Scarlet fever has practically become endemic, and 82 cases were notified, as compared with 90 cases in the previous year, but the type was extremely mild, so mild indeed that actually no case succumbed to the poison. Influenza was productive of eight deaths, and seems to be a disease which has come to stay in a greater or lesser degree. Whooping cough was responsible for eight deaths.

In the main, the town escaped any distinct epidemic of zymotic enteritis (summer diarrhœa)—and yet the condition occasioned 17 deaths. The severe and very fatal epidemic of measles, which was responsible for 57 deaths in 1904, persisted during the earlier portion of 1905, when 30 deaths resulted, of which 24 were registered during the first quarter, and three during the second. A little later, the disease to all intents and purposes disappeared. The notified cases of diphtheria numbered 75 in 1905, as against 81 in 1904, and yielded seven deaths as compared with 19. These figures are striking, and suggest a greatly varying virulence of the diphtheritic poison from year to year—unless it be that last year a much greater use was made of the serum treatment than formerly. Just as was the case in 1904, there were no fewer than eight deaths from enteric fever; and as the notified cases only numbered 24, the disease had a death-rate of 33·3 per cent., which must be regarded as exceptionally high. The notified cases of enteric fever in 1904 numbered 54. Then, however, it was apprehended that the disease might assume an epidemic character—which was never the case last year.

Reference to the vaccination returns will shew that the results obtained were highly satisfactory. Thus of 837 children alive at the end of June, 1905, and born during the previous twelve months, no fewer than 747 were successfully vaccinated. Included in the balance of unvaccinated cases, amounting to 90, there were 41 certificates of exemption on account of conscientious objection, and five of medical postponement. The percentage of successful vaccination for the past five years was as follows:—

1901	...	...	...	...	62·7
1902	...	...	...	...	84·7
1903	...	...	...	...	88·5
1904	...	...	...	...	89·2
1905	...	...	...	...	89·2

It will be seen that the percentages for 1904 and 1905 were identical—and they indicate excellent work on the part of the vaccination officer. The calf lymph supplied by the Government has again yielded very good results.

In May last, when reporting to the Council, I drew attention to the insanity condition of many of the yards and courts in the town, owing to the lack of paving, and afterwards at the request of the Town Clerk, furnished a special report upon the subject, in which the particular courts of which I had complained were mentioned, and details were given of the special nuisances arising in populous areas with unpaved courts and yards. This report was presented at your meeting in June. Although the spaces specially mentioned at the time need not again be given, I think it advisable to incorporate that report in my Annual Statement.

After a few preliminary remarks the report was as follows:—

It must be remembered that these spaces are much used by the house occupiers and their children, the latter in many instances using them as play grounds. The occupiers in many cases keep fowls or pigs or pigeons, which may be outside the nearest point from the dwellings prohibited by law. Practically in every yard is a privy-midden or there may be several. Ashes and various house refuse are carried to the midden from the houses, and across the open spaces, food is taken to the fowls or pigs. The fowls or

pigeons walk about the yard, their droppings being scattered about. In many cases portions of the soap suds from the wash-house find their way on to the yard surface, where may be the channeling overflows. Further than this in more thickly populated and poorer quarters—and it is here that the courts are most numerous and ill-paved—it frequently happens that the younger children commit nuisances upon the yard surface, and so it is a common sight to see portions of human excrement lying about. Let such a state of things once be pictured in the mind, and it is easy to understand how a serious state of things arises. These yard surfaces are by no means level or upon an even slope, as would be the case if they were paved. The weather is sometimes wet, and sometimes dry. In wet weather the surface is paddled and churned up, whilst any excrement is more or less broken up trodden in and mixed with the mud of the yard or court, where it lodges and sooner or later decomposes. Following this there comes, may be, a spell of dry weather, when the surface of the ground dries, and the traffic converts the top layer into dust. There is also the double effect of sun and rain, the former aiding putrefactive changes, and the wind blowing about the decomposed products. The difficulty and danger are increased when any defect occurs in a midden or privy, allowing the escape of some of the sewerage contents.

Can it be a matter of surprise, that such germ laden dust being inhaled by the people and their children occasions disease? May be, moreover it is carried in the louses and lodges upon the food or in the milk. In the summer also such impurities lying about encourage a regular plague of flies and these invade the houses, carrying with them filth from the outside, which they transfer to the food. Some such process as this I believe to be at work in the production of our annual outbreak of Summer Diarrhœa the fatal character of which we know so well.

The foregoing remarks will make plain to you my reasons for urging that a grave danger to the health of the town is caused by unpaved yards in populous centres, and I would assure the members of the Council that there is a considerable probability that an additional safeguard to the health of the town would be afforded by the systematic paving of such courts and yards as present the sanitary defects to which I have referred. Inasmuch as the nuisances

arising from the present unpaved courts and yards are in many cases of an indirect kind, it may be necessary for the Council to regard the matter as one of public interest and make the outlay chargeable rather to the town than to individuals. The expenditure however would be I consider, highly advantageous and I sincerely trust that the matter may receive the earnest consideration of your members.

This matter I understand was considered by the Council and certain enquires as to cost were suggested. Nothing further however had been done at the end of the year, but again I would strongly advise that the question should receive your serious attention. The danger from polluted courts and yards which are unpaved is a very real one, and I greatly hope that so grave a menace to the health of the town may be removed as the result of your action.

Sanitary Work.

Appended is a table shewing the work carried out in the Sanitary Inspector's Department :—

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK done in the Sanitary Inspector's Department during the year 1905, in the Urban District of Wednesbury.

					Inspections and Observations made.	Formal Notices by Authority.	Nuisances abated after Notice.
Foul Conditions	} Dwelling Houses and Schools				247	28	36
Structural Defects					11	11	11
Overcrowding					12	12	12
Unfit for Habitation					4	4	4
Lodging Houses ...	...	...	...	...	154	3	3
Bakehouses ...	...	...	...	...	70	4	4
Slaughter Houses ...	...	...	...	...	124	0	19
Ashpits and Privies ...	...	...	...	...	6320	124	167
Deposits of Refuse and Manure ...	...	...	...	...	5	5	5
Water Closets ...	...	...	...	...	97	33	44
Defective Traps	} House Drainage				93	36	41
Other Faults					52	32	36
Animals improperly kept ...	...	...	...	...	15	2	2
Other Nuisances...	...	...	...	...	60	32	32
Totals	..	...	...	...	7264	326	416

Seizures of Unwholesome Food :—

Two Hind Quarters of Beef (Bone stink in Market).

Precautions against Infectious Disease :—

Lots of Infected Bedding disinfected or destroyed 57

Houses disinfected after Infectious Disease ... 163

The Inspectors under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act have now 15 cowsheds and 63 dairies under their control, to which 300 visits have been made, and orders given to whitewash in 14 instances.

Factory and Workshops' Act, 1901.

Under this Act there are 26 Bakehouses, and these have received periodical inspections, and note kept of their capacity and means of ventilation. In four cases it was found necessary to issue orders for their sanitary improvement.

There are also 96 workshops for various trades. Most of these have been visited, and where necessary, orders issued for white-washing, which were promptly attended to.

Amongst other sanitary improvements carried out during the year were the following :—

No. 24 Trowse Lane.—Dumbwell filled up, ashpit and privies reconstructed, two water closets erected and connected with the rest of the premises into the public sewer, yard paved.

No. 139, 140 and 141 Darlaston Road.—Privies and cisterns removed, two water closets erected with dry ashpit, yard paved, and premises connected to public sewer.

No. 36, 37, 38 and 39 Lower High Street.—Ashpits and privies removed and water closets provided for each, yard part paved.

No. 77 to 82 Bridge Street.—Yard redrained, and sinks and sink drains relaid in all washhouses.

In several instances the midden system has been removed, and water closets provided with dry ash receptacles.

An uncommon but serious kind of nuisance was recorded, arising from the defective connection made by the Mond Gas Company to the engine at Messrs. E. W. Turner's timber yard at Camp Hill Lane. This was at once reported, and order made to remedy the same, which was attended to at once by the company, and no further cause has arisen for complaint.

In four instances notices were served for additional closet accommodation, which was duly provided.

The number of slaughter-houses remain the same as last year. A fresh application was made during the year for a license, but the premises not being found suitable it was refused.

The night-soil contractor has emptied and cleansed 5782 ashpits and cisterns during the year, which is a large increase on any previous year. The work has been smoothly carried out, and generally speaking with greater efficiency than any past year.

With this report I have completed my survey of the events of the year from a health standpoint. Such figures and statistics have been given as will inform the Council upon the main points of interest, and they will be found to compare favourably with the years that have gone before.

I remain, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER C. GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

Medical Officer of Health.